Incentives to farmers

*332. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any specific incentives have been given to the farmers of wheat producing areas this year so as to ensure increased production of wheat in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the likely expenditure incurred/to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Centrally Sponsored National Food Security Mission—Wheat (NFSM-Wheat) has been launched for implementation from Rabi, 2007-08 in 138 identified districts of nine states namely Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal with an aim to increase production of wheat by 8 million tones by the end of Eleventh Plan (2011-12) in the country.

Under this Mission incentives are provided for demonstrations of improved package of practices; seed replacement; micronutrients; gypsum; zero till seed drills; rotavators; pilot project on community generators for irrigation in shallow water table areas; diesel pumpsets; farmers trainings; award for best performing districts, new initiatives etc.

During the current rabi season (2007-08) an amount of Rs. 163.393 crore has been approved, out of which an amount of Rs. 89.20 crores has been released. Besides, 5,10,480 number of wheat minikits of latest varieties (5 kg each) with a cost of Rs. 5.10 crore have also been allocated.

In addition to this, Integrated Cereals Development Programme—Wheat (ICDP-Wheat) has been under implementation on 90:10 sharing basis between GOI and implementing states in non-NFSM districts through Macro Management Mode of Agriculture. Under this Scheme incentives are provided for distribution of seeds, propagation of improved production technologies, integrated pests management, training of farmers, farm implements, sprinkler sets, etc. Besides, Frontline demonstrations are also organized by the ICAR on farmers' fields on 100 per cent GOI assistance.

Survey for gauge conversion

†*333. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals for rail-tracks on which survey work for gauge conversion has been included in the Rail Budget for the year 2007-08;

(b) the time limit fixed for completion of the survey work of the above gauge conversion; and

(c) the criteria fixed and approval of guage conversion work on completion of survey work?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.